

Health and Wellness Advisory Committee
June 1, 2011
Holiday Park Senior Center
Meeting Summary

Attendees: Odile Saddi; Phil Smakula; Shawn Brennan; Mary Sweeney; Roliette Gooding; Sara McKechnie, Michael Patterson, Ian Kremer, Marcy Drozdowicz

Guest Speaker: Leta Blank, SHIP, to discuss Medicare

Medicare

Leta discussed various aspects of Medicare and handed out many helpful resources. In Montgomery County, she said it is rare for Medicare beneficiaries to struggle to find doctors who will accept Medicare, that it is more a problem in rural settings. However, she pointed out that one cannot assume that all physicians in a practice are Medicare providers. Also, she said the finding doctors who accept both Medicare and Medicaid can be dicey, especially for mental health services. Medicare doesn't maintain a provider directory; Leta suggested that folks ask friends and family for ideas about good doctors. Also, hospitals have referral services. Questions to ask: is the doctor easy to talk to or always in a rush? How much time can you expect to wait to get an appointment or wait in the waiting room?

7800 Montgomery County residents are turning 65 in 2011 and 8200 in 2012. Individuals currently enrolled in an employer based group health plan do not need to enroll.

Maryland Senior Prescription Assistance Program is not fully taken advantage of, partially because people don't know about it. Go to this site for an overview:

<http://www.marylandspdap.com/>. Also, people may not realize that pharmaceutical companies can often provide financial assistance. Leta agreed to send us a "message" we can send on to seniors so that they know about these options.

Enrollment for Part D (prescription program) will be between Oct.15-Dec. 7, 2011. It is important to review plan options each year to make sure that you're in the best plan for your situation.

Fall Prevention Campaign

Briefly reviewed last year's activities and discussed a proposal for this year's. Generated ideas. Shawn asked committee members to plan to host fall prevention activities in September and/or to ask a colleague in another organization to do the same. Shawn will forward last year's invitation to community groups to participate, and needs feedback on suggested changes. Marcy said OASIS will offer "Free From Falls," a six-week program, Oct. 31-Dec.

Announcements

Michael Patterson is offering cognitive health programs in partnership with Alzheimer's Association and Holiday Park Senior Center. Ian discussed other initiatives of the Alzheimer's Assoc. Roliette announced Men's Health Day on June 9 at Suburban Hospital. Marcy provided OASIS calendar. Odile announced WHARFF on June 11. Phil announced the re-funding of the Neighborhood Senior Programs and that they we re-start in mid-September at 8 locations.